

**CITY of BURIEN**  
**Department of Community Development**

**Interpretation # 04-01**

**Subject:** Special Event Signs (BMC 19.30.140) and Community Event Signs (BMC 19.30.030.15)

**Interpretation:** It is my interpretation that if a community organization cannot effectively promote their special events using a promotional banner, then A-frame, t-frame or similar portable or moveable signs may be used for “community events” pursuant to a Special Event Sign Permit. All other applicable sign code provisions still apply.

**Findings of Fact:**

- *The defined or common meaning of the words of the provisions:*
  1. BMC 19.30.030.15 Community event sign - an on- or off-site sign promoting a governmental, charitable or civic activity sponsored by a governmental entity or private nonprofit organization.
  2. A Special Event Sign Permit is required to display a Community Event Sign (BMC Table 19.30-1).
  3. Promotional banners are permitted with a Special Event Sign Permit as long as they are attached to a building, fence, or between two or more light poles. (BMC Table 19.30-1)
  4. A-frame, t-frame and similar portable or moveable signs are prohibited and are not subject to a variance, Master Sign Plan or Special Event Sign Permit (BMC 19.30.040).
- *The general purpose of the provisions as expressed in the provisions.*

BMC 19.30.140.1 provides as the purpose of special event sign permits: Display of special event signs (carnival-like devices and promotional banners) “...is a privilege granted by this code to allow businesses flexibility in promoting their goods and services, and to allow community based organizations the ability to promote their special events in a temporary manner. The purpose of a special event sign permit is to allow limited use of these signs and devices in a manner in which they will not detract from the aesthetics of the community and to ensure compliance with the provisions of this code” (emphasis added).
- *The logical or likely meaning of the provisions viewed in relation to the Comprehensive Plan and applicable purpose and intent statements in this Code.*

The logical meaning of these provisions is that community organizations should have the ability to effectively promote their temporary special events.

**Conclusions:**

The code allows promotional banners, which would be the preferred method of promoting community events. In some cases, use of a properly displayed promotional banner is impossible or ineffective. An example is an event in a large open parking lot or park where a banner cannot be properly and/or effectively displayed. Another example is an off-site banner that would need to be displayed on a building or property that the organization does not own. In these types of cases, the sign code essentially prohibits the community organization from effectively promoting its event.

This does not meet the intent of the sign code. If a community organization cannot effectively promote their special events using a promotional banner, then allowing A-frame, t-frame or similar portable or moveable signs to be used complies with the intent of the sign code. A Special Event Sign Permit is still required, and all other sign code provisions (especially relating to sign quality and location) still apply.

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Community Development Director

May 4, 2004  
Date